



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

NOTES.

MUNICIPAL SOCIALISM IN EUROPE.¹

THE term Socialism, even in its formation, is essentially vague. The suffix, "ism," added to the word "social" conveys the idea of a social system, or a complex of social systems. Its significance became still less precise when the word began to be frequently used. But socialistic systems, while they are vague and inconclusive in regard to particulars, offer today in their general outlines a relative agreement. Socialism is now understood to mean a theory of society in which economic production is socialized or collectivized, that is, in which the means of production are held in common. In spite of the fact that the definition of Marx, of Malon, and of Bakounin differed somewhat from this, the word socialism has no longer the uncertainty which it once had.

Coupled with adjectives, the signification of the word socialism, of course, varies. What then is to be understood by the expression "municipal socialism?" While today we hear a great deal about municipal socialism, no one seems to know exactly what it is. I have tried in vain to find a satisfactory definition. Finally I have attempted to construct a theory by means of the facts.

At the recent International Congress of Socialists in London, the municipalities of Saint Denis and Saint Owen were recognized as socialistic. In a recent volume issued from the statistical office of the Department of the Seine for the most important municipalities of this department, outside of Paris, I find for 1895 the following eloquent data :

Communes	Inhabitants	Octroi	Other imposts	Octroi per capita
Vincennes,	25,000	254,000	133,000	15.50
Ivry,	22,000	282,000	113,000	17.95
Auberville,	25,000	372,000	114,000	20.65
Clichy,	30,000	555,000	93,000	21.60
Leo-Perret,	40,000	766,000	164,000	23.25
Saint Owen,	26,000	465,000	165,000	24.20
Saint Denis,	51,000	1,080,000	185,000	24.80

Translated from the manuscript by I. W. Howerth.

These figures show that the socialistic municipalities of Saint Owen and of Saint Denis are at once distinguished from all the others by the large imposts which they collected. As Saint Owen and Saint Denis are among the cities having the largest population, their public services ought to cost less in proportion than those of Ivry or Vincennes, for it is well known that every service costs less the greater the demand for it. But the octroi levied by Saint Owen and Saint Denis was enormous as compared with that imposed by the non-socialistic communes in the same department.

Roubaix has also been cited as a model socialistic municipality. I have taken the following data from an authentic source, a journal of scientific socialism (sic) edited by Tubati. Notice how in three consecutive years the entries of the municipality of Roubaix, thanks to the work of the socialists, increased :

1891	1892	1893
4,620,460	4,726,035	5,319,203

These figures include both the ordinary and extraordinary receipts. The ordinary receipts alone had increased in 1893 from 4,021,281 in 1890 to 4,476,565. Of this increase 295,512 francs were due to the octroi; that is, the finances of the commune of Roubaix owe their principal increase to the octroi. The socialists do not show very much originality in levying new imposts, and it seems they do not know how to do any better by the bourgeoisie than to recur to those odious instruments of modern social spoliation, among which is undoubtedly the octroi.

Max Albert, who gives these statistics concerning the municipal financial operations of the socialists of Roubaix, adds: "Such, rapidly sketched, is the work of the socialistic Communal Council of Roubaix in the two years since it was elected. Behold what the working men of Roubaix have accomplished in two years!" And in manifest complacency he continues, "It was not upon the laboring class that this new impost fell." He concludes by saying that he leaves it "to all well disposed men to judge the work of the socialistic municipality of Roubaix." Truly I do not know what judgment well disposed men would form of the socialistic municipality of Roubaix, but the fact remains that while the socialists denounce all cases of taxes unjustly levied, Albert still boasts of what the socialists have done at Roubaix.

It would be easy to cite many other cases of municipal socialism, especially in Belgium and in England. In England municipal social-

ism has advanced more rapidly than in other countries, and in that country the expenses of local public bodies, which were about 50 millions a few years ago, were in 1895 70 millions, and the public debt of these local public bodies has increased from 2300 million pounds in 1875 to 5500 million pounds in 1895. That is, the public debt of English local bodies was almost trebled in twenty years, while in the same time the national debt decreased from 19 billions to 16 billions. Knowing these facts, I follow the advice of August Comte and deduce from them the simplest hypothesis. Now the most obvious and clearest deduction in our case is the following: municipal socialism signifies a prodigious increase of the expenses of local public bodies. When the *laissez faire* economists were still alive, they affirmed that the tax collector is equally odious to the taxpayer whether he comes in the name of the state or in the name of the local authorities. But at present *laissez faire* economists seem to be exiled to the planet Neptune. If they were still on earth they would without much difficulty demonstrate that public services performed by the municipality cost more and are not so well executed as they are when left to individual activity and free competition. In England, as municipal socialism prevails quite generally, all the more important cities have monopolized the tramways and the omnibuses. In his *Voyages and Discoveries* of Signor Faubert, lately published, Yves Guyot makes a very interesting comparison. He shows that in none of the principal cities of England are the means of transporting the people so well arranged, so convenient, and so swift, as in London. An exception among the more important cities of England, the metropolis leaves this public service to free competition. For three or four pence one may ride across London, a distance of fully thirty miles.

Besides omnibuses, there is an extensive and much used system of metropolitan railways, and the cab service is almost beyond criticism. In 1891 the number of cabs in London was given as 18,000, omnibuses 10,400. Since then the number has greatly increased. In 1895 the metropolitan street railways carried 87 million passengers—810,000 per kilometer, 240,000 per day. The tramways of North London carried 80 million passengers—220,000 per day.

In this transportation service, which all who have been in London agree in calling wonderful, municipal socialism has no part. And yet even in London we find a growing tendency toward municipal socialism. The functions of its local governing bodies have been enlarged

and an ever increasing burden of taxation has been laid upon its citizens. Already municipal scandals seem in order; such, for instance, as the boodling in the financial administration of the city discovered recently by Stead.

The bureau of Italian statistics has lately published a valuable volume on communal finances which contains the local tariffs of each separate commune, the communal property, and the communal and provincial debts for the year 1895. These figures show the development of municipal socialism in Italy:

Years	Actual receipts	Movement of Capital
1882	341.6	49.2
1883	347.0	65.4
1884	356.8	79.0
1885	361.1	81.0
1886	373.5	90.0
1887	380.7	116.4
1888	390.7	130.2
1889	397.8	124.8
1891	419.4	103.1
1895	462.5	61.1

The phrase "movement of capital," which played such an important part in the happy-go-lucky period of finance has now lost its cabalistic prestige. In the phrase "movement of capital" are concealed the expenses connected with the sale of public goods. The billion or more of ecclesiastical expropriation which the Italian state has suffered has all come out of the property of the "state" under the denomination, "movement of capital," and no one perceived until after the transaction took place that the state was short by about one billion lire of real estate. Our municipalities followed the example of the state; that is, they wished to enjoy the illusion of still possessing goods which they had been obliged to sell, consequently they covered up with this indefinite and vague expression, "movement of capital," the actual diminution of their property.

Let us accept for the moment this illusion which the optimistic municipal assessors are trying to produce concerning their finances, and let us not take account of this movement of capital. The fact remains that the effective receipts of the Italian municipalities have been increased irregularly from 1892 to 1895 by 85 millions, a sum equal to about one-fourth of the total municipal receipts. On the other hand,

in the last year, the nation suffered from an unparalleled crisis, in which economic welfare was arrested and suffered a decline. This is shown by the acknowledged diminution in the consumption of articles most generally used by the mass of the population. From 1882 to 1891 debts were doubled, and in 1895 increased, in comparison with 1882 by 50 per cent.

Years	Liabilities	Years	Liabilities
1882	32.9	1887	91.6
1883	50.0	1888	102.9
1884	60.3	1889	89.7
1885	59.3	1891	66.6
1886	65.3	1895	45.1

It appears that in the last few years the communal administrations restrained themselves somewhat in contracting debts, but it may be that they made a virtue of necessity, and resorted less to loans simply because they could not obtain them with the same facility as before. The fact remains that the communal debts of 763 millions in 1882 have grown to 1139 millions in 1894, an increase of more than two-fifths in less than thirteen years.

How fortunate it would have been for Italy if the increase of her private wealth had followed the same ratio as the receipts of the local public bodies. The facts in regard to the matter are just the opposite. William Sumner says that if discoveries and inventions did not increase the productive power of mankind more rapidly than statesmen could destroy it, the advance of civilization would be arrested. So far as Italy is concerned it seems as if the pessimistic idea of Sumner has been realized.

Apart from the fact that the great increase of communal receipts from 101 millions in 1882 to 152 millions in 1895 is due largely to odious taxes like the octroi, other facts concerning the financial situation of the communes may be gathered from the data of the bureau of statistics. More serious than the disproportions between receipts and expenditures, is a disorder in the finances of Italy's local public bodies, a hit-or-miss policy of social spoliation which explains of itself the violent protests of the masses. Attempts at revolt have been made now in one commune and now in another and have become an endemic manifestation in our social life. In poverty-stricken regions like Sicily, in which individual wealth is estimated at scarcely a third of that of Piedmont or of Lombardy, the local taxes are heavier than in the

latter provinces, and the local public expenses in the former are the same as in the latter. In certain communes some imposts which fall upon special classes are heavier, and in others where these social classes hold the administrative power these forms of taxes scarcely exist, or do not exist at all.

Thiers has remarked that in 1789 wherever the communes enjoyed some liberty they soon fell into a condition of bankruptcy. Now the acts of 1888 and 1894 enlarged the power of the English local bodies, and the freedom given to these local bodies in the classic land of liberalism has produced communal socialism; that is, a prodigious development of public expense, and the administrative disorder which has doubled the public debt in a few years. In Italy, in spite of the fact that local liberty is restricted, the function of some local public bodies has increased extraordinarily, and the wealth which these local bodies demand from the citizens is increasing irregularly. It is strange that some wish to increase this liberty, when the experience of all countries shows that, far from securing a better administration, it reduces the municipality to distress, and extorts from its citizens enormous wealth which they ought to employ in satisfying their urgent needs. This wealth the local public bodies expend on public adornment more or less stupid, sacrificing it to the new "Goddess of Hygiene" and scarcely ever using it to satisfy any true social needs.¹

Such, briefly, is the work of Municipal Socialism in Europe.

G. FIAMINGO.

ROME.

CO-OPERATION BY FARMERS.

A TRAVELER passing through the southern part of Minnesota is impressed with the evidences of prosperity. Especially is this true when his manner of travel permits close observation and inquiry. He finds there farming communities engaged in the dairy business on a large scale, but the noticeable thing is the organization of this business on a co-operative basis.

A very good example of the results coming from this industry is seen in Steele county. This county is situated in the second tier of

¹For example: The cities of London and Paris lack a sufficient water supply, as do also the great majority of European cities, especially those of Italy.